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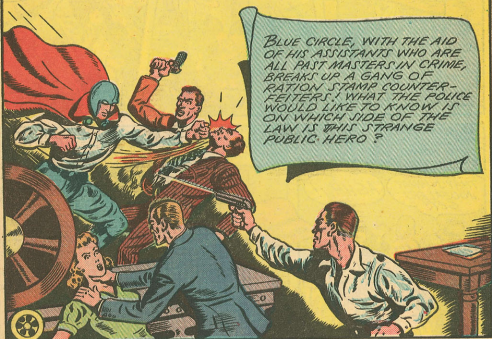
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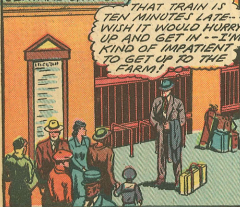
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BLUE CIRCLE



BEN STAFFORD, THE BLUE CIRCLE, WAITS FOR A TRAIN AT GRAND CENTRAL STATION!



A WILD SCREAM SUDDENLY BREAKS THROUGH THE HUBBUB OF SOUND...



LEN STAFFORD DECIDES TO INVESTIGATE AS THE BLUE CIRCLE!

NO-ONE SCREAMS LIKE THAT IN A PLACE LIKE GRAND CENTRAL UNLESS SOMETHING PRETTY BAD HAS HAPPENED!



AS BLUE CIRCLE RACES TOWARD THE OPEN STATION --

MY GOSH! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

MAYBE THAT'LL TEACH YOU, DANNY MAXIM!

MAYBE YOU FELLOWS NEED SOME SORT OF LESSON TOO!

YIII-- THE BLUE CIRCLE!



AS BLUE CIRCLE LAYS INTO THE GANGSTERS, ONE OF THEM TURNS, PULLS A GUN, AND SHOOTS THEIR VICTIM!

THAT'S WHAT SQUEALERS GET!

AGHHH!



WHY, YOU ROTTEN COLD BLOODED KILLER!

KEEP GOING, MATT-- I'LL GET THE GIRL!



THE MURDERER IS CAUGHT IN A CROSS-FIRE OF POLICE BULLETS AS HE RACES THROUGH THE STATION!

STOP HIM!

AND THAT IS WHAT MURDERERS CAN EXPECT FROM THE LAW!

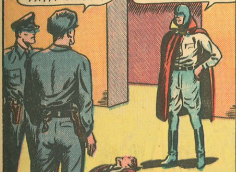


THAT FINISHES HIM, BUT THOSE OTHER MUGS GOT AWAY-- AND WHO DID THEY MEAN BY "THE GIRL"? WELL, LEN STAFFORD I GUESS YOU'LL HAVE TO POSTPONE YOUR TRIP TO THE COUNTRY!



BLUE CIRCLE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO DO WITH THIS?

JUST AN INNOCENT BY-STANDER! GOOD BY-- I'M LEAVING.



BLUE CIRCLE GETS AWAY FROM THE STATION AND LATER THAT DAY--

WHAT IS THE BLUE CIRCLE COUNCIL CALLED ABOUT THIS TIME, CHUCK?

I IMAGINE IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE GRAND CENTRAL MURDERS-- HAVEN'T YOU SEEN THE PAPER?



ALL MEMBERS PRESENT, BLUE CIRCLE ENTERS...

THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE BLUE CIRCLE WILL COME TO ORDER!

ALL PRESENT!

BLUE CIRCLE EXPLAINS WHAT HAPPENED EARLIER IN THE DAY AT THE STATION.

OF COURSE, THE POLICE ARE SURE I HAD SOME HAND IN THE KILLING--I HAD A BIT OF TROUBLE GETTING AWAY FROM THEM! WHO CAN GIVE ME A LINE ON DANNY MAXIM?

DANNY MAXIM WAS GIVEN A SUSPENDED SENTENCE IN 1936 ON A COUNTERFEITING CHARGE. THE GIRL WHO HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED MAY HAVE BEEN HIS SISTER IRENE! THAT'S ALL I CAN TELL YOU!

GOOD!



THAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE VERY HELPFUL, GREG! NOW, WE'LL ADJOURN THE COUNCIL BUT BE READY TO REPORT BACK AT ANY TIME!

IF WE HEAR ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT THIS, WE'LL CHECK IN!



WELL, WE NOW KNOW SEVERAL THINGS-- IF THE GIRL IN QUESTION IS DANNY'S SISTER, AND HE WAS A COUNTERFEITER, THIS PROBABLY TIES UP WITH A BLACK MARKET GANG SOMEHOW. I THINK I'LL TAKE A WALK-- MAYBE I'LL GET SOME IDEA ON HOW TO APPROACH THIS THING FROM HERE.



WHO WOULD SUSPECT THAT THE NICE YOUNG GENTLEMAN SAUNTERING ALONG THE AVENUE IS THE BLUE CIRCLE?

HMM - FIRST OFF, I'D BETTER CHECK ON THAT GIRL... THERE MAY BE A GOOD LEAD THROUGH HER!



THE EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES SHOULD GIVE SOME CLUE ABOUT HER-- HMM! TOO BAD I USED MY SHOE COUPON, I COULD USE ANOTHER PAIR! THOSE ARE NICE LOOKING SHOES! O.S.



AS LEN IDLY MUSES--
NEED A PAIR EH? OF SHOES, BUD?
WHAT? OH, YES-- I DO!



YOU LOOK LIKE A RIGHT GUY-- HOW'D YOU LIKE TO BUY A COUPLE OF BOOKS? TEN BUCKS EACH --

THIS FELLOW IS ONE OF THE MOB WHO KILLED MAXIM IN THE STATION THIS MORNING!! YOU'VE MADE A SALE, FRIEND!



HERE'S YOUR MONEY-- LET'S HAVE THOSE BOOKS! SAY, HOW'D YOU GET THEM?

OH, I HAVE A PAL ON THE RATION BOARD! IF YOU WANT ANY MORE, YOU CAN FIND ME AROUND



WHAT A STROKE OF LUCK! THAT FELLOW HAS NO IDEA HOW MUCH WORK HE'S SAVED THE BLUE CIRCLE!

HA! THAT WAS AN EASY TOUCH-- HE'LL BE A GOOD CUSTOMER!



AND, I'VE GOT AN IDEA NOW AS TO HOW I CAN BRING THOSE GUYS OUT INTO THE OPEN! BOY, HE'LL WISH HE'D NEVER SOLD ME THOSE COUNTERFEIT RATION BOOKS!



MINUTES LATER --

THIS FELLOW IS BEING VERY HELPFUL-- LOOKS AS THOUGH HE'S HEADING RIGHT BACK TO THEIR HEADQUARTERS!

I'M GETTIN' RID OF THOSE BOOKS FASTER EVERY DAY!



SO THAT'S THE PLACE,
EH? I'LL WAIT A FEW
MINUTES UNTIL THE
COAST IS CLEAR THEN
FOLLOW HIM!



BOY, 500 BUCKS TODAY!
WAIT'LL THE
BOSS HEAR!

BLUE CIRCLE CAUTIOUSLY
ENTERS THE HOUSE MOMENTS
LATER.

DOOR OPEN--
NO ONE AROUND--
NO FURNITURE...THIS
IS DARNED QUEER!
WAIT A MINUTE...



THAT SOUNDS LIKE A
MACHINE RUNNING!
THAT MUST BE THE
PRESS-- PROBABLY
DOWN IN THE ...



-- CELL -- HEY!

LOOK-- IT'S BLUE
CIRCLE!

I KNEW IT'D BE
A GOOD IDEA TO
KEEP THAT TRAP
DOOR!



THIS IS A BIT UNEXPECTED,
BLUE CIRCLE-- BUT I
GUESS THE BOSS
WOULD ALWAYS BE
GLAD TO SEE YOU!
MOVE!

MOMENTS
LATER.

MOVE?
OKAY!

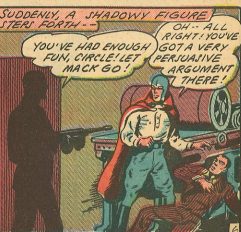
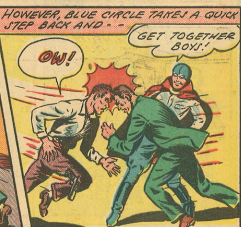


HOW'S
THIS?

YELP!

MACK--
WATCH
OUT!





THE MAN STEPS FORWARD INTO THE LIGHT-- BUT THE EFFECT ON BLUE CIRCLE IS STARTLING!

JUST STAND STILL, CIRCLE!

OH! NO! GREG STERN!!

YES, I'M GREG STERN, SO WHAT? I'M ONE OF THE BEST COUNTERFEITERS THAT EVER TURNED OUT A DOLLAR BILL! SO WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME?

I-UH, THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING STRAIGHT, STERN!

SOMETHING'S DARNED SCREWY HERE-- STERN IS A MEMBER OF THE BLUE CIRCLE COUNCIL... AND THIS FELLOW DOESN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE ME!

I WAS, BUT THIS RATION RACKET IS PROFITABLE!

BLUE CIRCLE IS DIRECTED INTO ANOTHER OF THE CELLAR ROOMS--

IN THERE!

OH, HELLO! I PRESUME YOU'RE MISS MAXIM?

YES! THEY WON'T LET ME GO!

WE HAVE TO DETAIN THE YOUNG LADY FOR A VERY GOOD REASON! SIT DOWN, CIRCLE-- HAVE A CIGARETTE!

YOUR REASON IS MURDER, NO DOUBT?

BLUE CIRCLE MOVES SWIFTLY!

HEY!

I DON'T SMOKE!

AND, NEITHER DOES THE REAL GREG STERN! WHO ARE YOU? I'LL SEE, AS SOON AS I GET THAT MASK OFF YOUR FACE!

MACK! NICK!

WHILE THE MASQUERADER IS TRYING TO FIGHT OFF BLUE CIRCLE, IRENE MAXIM GRABS THE TOMMY GUN AND HIDES HERSELF IN A CLOSET.

HOLD STILL -- I'M GOING TO FIND OUT WHO YOU ARE AND WHY YOU WANT TO LOOK LIKE GREG STERN!

LET GO!



THE MAN STRUGGLES IN VAIN -- HIS MASK COMES OFF IN BLUE CIRCLE'S HAND!

DANNY MAXIM! BUT -- YOU WERE MURDERED!

I'LL KILL YOU FOR THIS!



BUT THE RACKETEER'S HENCHMEN HAD RECOVERED BY THIS TIME AND --

REACH, CIRCLE!

UH-OH! I MUST REMEMBER TO HIT HARDER NEXT TIME!



HOWEVER --

NO, YOU DON'T! DROP THOSE GUNS!

WHA -- GREG STERN! HEY, WHAT IS THIS?



I'LL KILL YOU, IRENE! YOU -- UGH!

TAKE IT EASY, PAL!

OH!



THEY NEEDED A GOOD COUNTERFEITER, CIRCLE, SO THEY KIDNAPPED ME! DAVE KNEW I'D BEEN GOING STRAIGHT, BUT HE FIGURED I'D PLAY BALL EVENTUALLY IF HE GAVE ME NO CHANCE TO REFUSE! THEY GOT ME THIS AFTERNOON WHEN I WAS ON MY WAY HOME FROM THE -- UH, A MEETING!

DAVE WAS TAKING NO CHANCES, WAS HE? WEARING THAT MASK, HE WOULD HAVE HAD YOU IN A FIX YOU COULDN'T GET OUT OF!



EXPLANATIONS ARE IN ORDER -- WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?

I HAD TWO BROTHERS, CIRCLE! THEY WERE TWINS, DANNY AND DAVE! THIS IS DAVE'S RACKET -- HE WANTED DANNY TO COME IN WITH HIM, BUT DANNY HAD BEEN GOING STRAIGHT AND HE REFUSED! HE WAS GOING TO TELL THE POLICE

SO THEY KILLED HIM, CIRCLE!

SO --



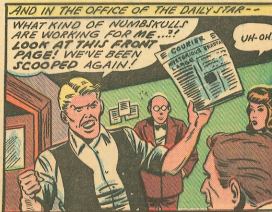
ONCE AGAIN BLUE CIRCLE OUTWITS THE FELLOWS WHO THINK MORE OF THEMSELVES THAN THEY DO OF THEIR COUNTRY -- REMEMBER TO BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS!

Gail Porter

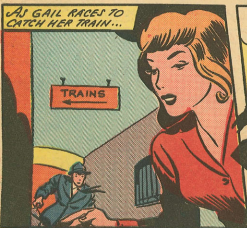
GIRL PHOTOGRAPHER

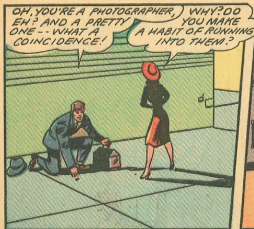


THAT SUCH THINGS AS VAMPIRES AND WEREWOLVES ARE STRICTLY IMAGINARY CREATURES, WAS ONE OF GAIL PORTER'S FIRM BELIEFS -- SHE'D HAVE STAKED HER LIFE ON IT... AND GAIL ALMOST DOES JUST THAT WHEN SHE MEETS THE HIDEOUS WEREWOLF OF WOONSOCKET!



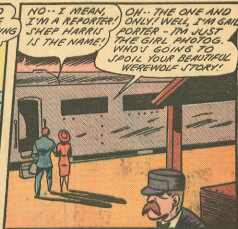
UH-OH!





OH, YOU'RE A PHOTOGRAPHER, WHY? DO EN? AND A PRETTY ONE-- WHAT A COINCIDENCE!

YOU MAKE A HABIT OF RUNNING INTO THEM?



NO-- I MEAN, I'M A REPORTER! SHEP HARRIS IS THE NAME!

OH-- THE ONE AND ONLY! WELL, I'M GAIL PORTER-- I'M JUST THE GIRL PHOTOG. WHO'S GOING TO SPOIL YOUR BEAUTIFUL WEREWOLF STORY!



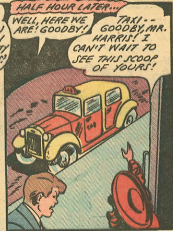
FUNNY, I NEVER HEARD YOUR NAME IN CONNECTION WITH THE COUPLET BEFORE!

OH, I'VE JUST BEEN PROMOTED-- I WAS A REWRITE MAN UP THERE UNTIL THIS STORY BROKE!



BUT BEGINNER OR NOT, MISS PORTER-- WHEN WE GET TO WOONSOCKET, I'LL GO MY OWN WAY! THIS IS MY STORY!

WHY, MR. HARRIS-- DON'T YOU BELIEVE IN THE INTEGRITY OF THE PRESS?



HALF HOUR LATER...

TAXI-- WELL, HERE WE ARE! GOODBY!

TAXI-- GOODBY, MR. HARRIS! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THIS SCOOP OF YOURS!



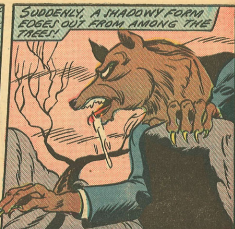
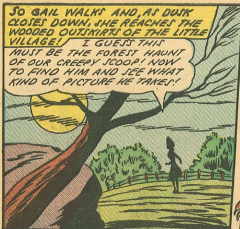
NOT THIS CAB, LADY-- I CALLED AND RESERVED IT!

AND IT'S THE ONLY ONE IN WOONSOCKET, I'LL BET!



THAT'S RIGHT-- BUT MY BEASTIE HANGS OUT A SHORT DISTANCE OUT OF TOWN! ABOUT FIVE MILES WALK!

BOY-- FOR A NEW MEMBER OF OUR HONORED RANKS, HE'S PRETTY TOUGH!



SOME MINUTES LATER--
GAIL TRIES DIZZILY TO
RISE!

GAIL! GAIL!
WHAT HAPPENED?



OH, IT'S
YOU! I--
I JUST
STUMBLED!
WHW!

OH-- MY
HEAD FEELS
LIKE AN
OVERACTIVE
FREIGHT
TRAIN!



COME ON,
I'LL HELP
YOU TO THE
HOTEL-- DON'T
WANT TO HANG
AROUND HERE--
I SAW THE
WEREWOLF
AGAIN!

I GUESS I'LL
HAVE TO ADMIT
IT-- I SAW
THE THING,
TOO, SHEP!

OH--
THAT'S HOW
YOU FELT?
YOU WERE
RUNNING AWAY
FROM MY STORY!
WELL, I'M GLAD
YOU'RE OKAY!

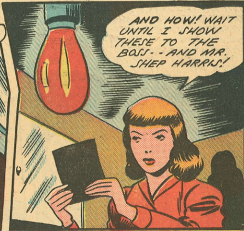


LATER THAT EVENING, GAIL SETS
UP AN IMPROMPTU DARKROOM IN
HER HOTEL SUITE! I'VE BEEN DOING

SOME FANCY
THINKING AND, UNLESS I MISS
MY GUESS, I SHOULD
HAVE SOME
FANCY PRINTS
HERE!



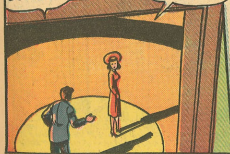
AND HOW! WAIT
UNTIL I SHOW
THESE TO THE
BOSS-- AND MR.
SHEP HARRIS!



EARLY THE NEXT
MORNING ---

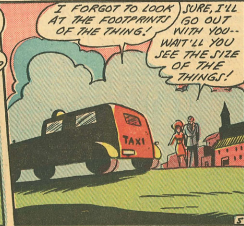
GOOD MORNING,
GAIL, FEELING
BETTER?

PRACTICALLY
WHOLE AGAIN--
ARE YOU RETURN-
ING TO THE
SCENE OF THE
CRIME, SHEP?



I FORGOT TO LOOK
AT THE FOOTPRINTS
OF THE THING!

SURE, I'LL
GO OUT
WITH YOU--
WAIT'LL YOU
SEE THE SIZE
OF THE
THINGS!



ARRIVING AT THE
EDGE OF THE WOODS--

SEE! THERE
THEY ARE!
TREMENDOUS,
EH?

CERTAINLY
ARE --
BUT,
LOOK
OVER
THERE!



WHAT A MARVELOUS
WORLD THIS IS! OUR
WEREWOLF HAS A
PURPLE HEART! NOW
I WONDER HOW HE
GOT WOUNDED IN
THE SERVICE OF
HIS COUNTRY?



MAYBE YOU'D
BETTER TUCK
THIS AWAY, JHEP!
WHO KNOWS YOU
MIGHT BE ABLE
TO USE IT
SOMEDAY!

BUT--
WHAT?--
I MEAN.
WHO...



IT'S NO USE TRYING TO KID ME,
JHEP! I SAW YOU DROP THIS LAST
NIGHT WHEN YOU BUMPED INTO
ME AT THE STATION! ANYHOW,
THE PICTURE I TOOK OF YOU
RUNNING AROUND IN THAT
WOLF ROBE DON'T LOOK
AS CONVINCING AS
THE WORD PICTURES
YOU WROTE!



OKAY, YOU WIN -- I WAS DIS-
CHARGED FROM THE ARMY AFTER
TARAWA -- I'M NOT A VERY GOOD
NEWSPAPERMAN AND I KNOW THE
COURIER WOULDN'T HAVE KEPT
ME ON MUCH LONGER IF I HADN'T
RIGGED UP THIS -- THIS! SAY! HOW
COULD YOU HAVE TAKEN MY
PICTURE? YOU DIDN'T USE

A FLASH
BULB!!



DON'T WORRY, YOU HAVEN'T
BEEN TRICKED -- I WAS
USING AN INFRARED
BULB! NO FLASH! NOW,
TAKE THESE NEGATIVES
AND TEAR 'EM UP! AND NO
MORE PHONEY STORIES!



YOU MEAN--?
GAIL, YOU'RE
A REAL
PAL! GOIN'
THINK OF
THE STORY
YOU HAD -- IF
YOU'D EXPOSED
ME!

GAIL RETURNS TO THE OFFICE OF
THE DAILY STAR--

WELL, HAVE YOU
GOT A STORY
FOR ME?

I CERTAINLY
HAVE! WHY, I
ACTUALLY SAW
THE WEREWOLF
BOSS-- BUT HE

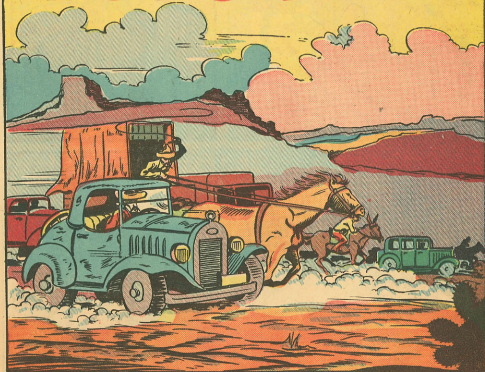
WAS SUCH A HANDSOME
BEAST, I LET HIM
GET AWAY!

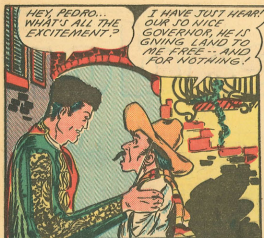
OH, JURE--
THE DAY
GAIL
PORTER
LET
ANY
STORY
GET AWAY--



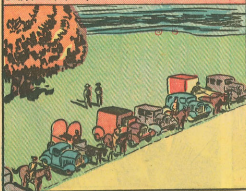
SO, GAIL PORTER, THE GIRL PHOTO, WITH
DEVELOPING FLUID IN HER VEINS, HAS A
SOFT HEART AFTER ALL-- BUT HER BOSS
HAD BETTER NOT FIND OUT!

Toreador





LATER IN THE DAY, AS THE TIME FOR THE LAND GRAB OPENING DRAWS NEAR, PEONS FROM MILES AROUND DRAW UP AT THE STARTING LINE!



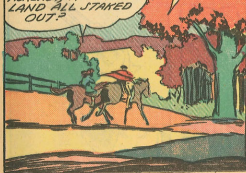
PATSY, LET'S RIDE OVER TO THE STARTING LINE AND WATCH THE FUN!

RIGHT-- I WOULDN'T MISS THIS FOR THE WORLD!



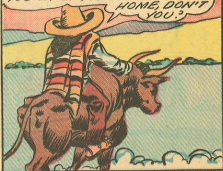
TOREADOR, HOW DO THEY KNOW THAT SOMEONE ISN'T WAITING OUT THERE ALREADY, WITH THEIR LAND ALL STAKED OUT?

THAT'S WHY THE SHERIFF IS GOING OUT NOW!



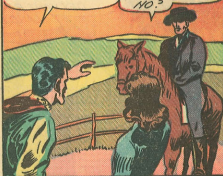
AND, COMING UP FROM THE DISTANCE...

PLEASE TO MAKE FASTER SPEED, PLEASE! WE WILL BE JUST IN TIME TO BE TOO LATE! YOU WANT A NICE HOME, DON'T YOU?



LOOK-- HERE COMES THE SHERIFF! HELLO! GOING OVER TO WATCH?

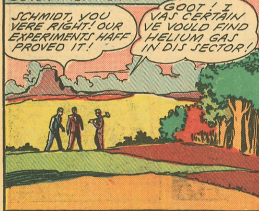
THAT EES RIGHT! WE SEE YOU THERE, EL TOREADOR, NO?



THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT WANTS TO BE SURE THAT EVERYONE GETS A FAIR DEAL! WE CAN TAKE A LOOK AROUND TOO, JUST TO BE SURE!



MEANTIME, SOME TEN MILES INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT LAND...



SCHMIDT, YOU WERE RIGHT! OUR EXPERIMENTS HAVE PROVED IT!

GOOT! I WAS CERTAIN WE WOULD FIND HELIUM GAS IN THIS SECTOR!

AND NOW, THERE IS NOT MUCH TIME--WE MUST REMOVE ALL TRACES OF OUR EXPERIMENT!



WE CONCEAL OURSELVES IN THE WOODS OVER THERE, NEIN?



JA--NO WUN VILL WANT DER TREES!

DAT IS RIGHT! WHEN THE LAND RUSH STARTS, THEY WILL NOT BE INTERESTED IN WOODS! THEY WANT RANCHING LAND!

BUT, WE MAKE SURE--WE HIDE IN THE TREES AND SO SOON AS THE SETTLERS COME CLOSE, WE STAKE OUT THIS LAND FOR OURSELVES!

UND FOR DER FATHERLAND! HEIL HITLER!



AND, BACK AT THE STARTING LINE--

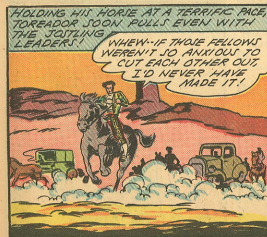
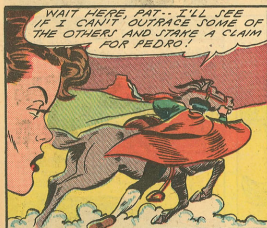


PEDRO, WON'T YOU TAKE MY HORSE? OH, NO! PEDRO AND HIS BULL, WE RACE LIKE THE WIND!



THE RACE FOR TERRITORY BEGINS--

BANG!





MEANWHILE, THE NAZIS
ARE ALSO BUSY - - -
FILL YOUR SOMBRERO
MIT WATER!

HERE!



OUR HORSES MUST
ALSO LOOK LIKE
DEY HAF BEEN
RACING!

SO
DER STUPID
MEXICANS DO
NOT KNOW VE
HAF FOOLED
DEM! JA!



HERE - - TAKE DIS CAKE
OFF JOAP UND VORK
UP A GOOT LATHER!
IT VILL LOOK LIKE
SWEAT!



DIS LOOKS SO
GOOT IT ALMOST
WOULD FOOL ME!

DEY PROBABLY
VILL NOT BOTHER
TO LOOK AT US--
BUT VE TAKE
NO CHANCES!



THEM, AS THE NAZIS RIDE OUT OF
THE WOODS - -

HURRY--DEY ARE COMING!
YOU ARE SURE
EVERYTHING IS
READY?

OUR PLAN IS
FOOL-
PROOF!



HERE COMES
DER FIRST VUN
NOW! VATCH!

TWO HORSEMEN
UP AHEAD--GOSH,
I DIDN'T THINK
ANYONE WAS
THAT FAR AHEAD
OF ME NOW!



THEY SEEM TO HAVE STOPPED
-- I WONDER IF THIS COULD
BE THE PIECE OF LAND THEY
WANT? FUNNY--IT'S NO GOOD
FOR FARMING OR GRAZING!



TOREADOR'S SWIFT ROPE CATCHES THE NAZIS NEATLY - AND IN TIME!

SO YOU WERE WAITING FOR THE SHERIFF, EH! THAT IS JUST FINE!

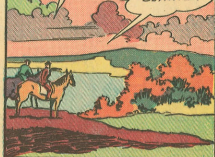
ACH, HIMMEL!



AN HOUR LATER - - -

MARIO --LOOK! A MAN ON A HORSE WAITING FOR US-- IT LOOKS LIKE...

A MAN ON A HORSE WITH SOMETHING DRAGGING BEHIND!



AND, AS THE SHERIFF DRAWS NEAR...

SHERIFF, I'VE GOT A COUPLE OF POACHERS WHO JUMPED THE GUN HERE, FOR YOU ' MIGHT INVESTIGATE THEIR GERMAN ACCENTS WHILE YOU'RE AT IT!

RIGHT INTERESTING, TOREADOR! THIS LAND THEY STAKED OUT BELONGS TO YOU, IF THEY HAVE PULLED A JOKE!



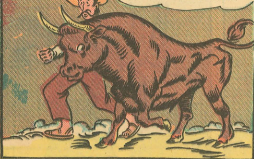
SO, SEVERAL DAYS LATER AT PAT KING'S RANCH ...

THE LAND WAS YOURS, PEDRO, BUT THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT WANTS TO BUY IT BACK FOR THE HELIUM DEPOSIT ON IT!

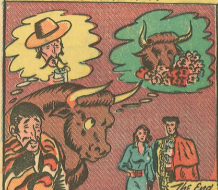
HO--I DO NOT UNDERSTAND! I HAVE THE LAND --I DO NOT HAVE IT!



SOMETHING SHE IS SCREWY! BUT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE MONEY - FOR THE REASON THAT YOU SMELL FLOWERS! SO, I BUY YOU MORE PRETTY POSIES, MY BEAUTIFUL BULL!



SO PEDRO AND HIS OWN BEAUTIFUL BULL RELAX IN THE WARM MEXICAN SUNSHINE TO DREAM!



THE END.

MAUREEN MARINE



A VICTIM OF A NAZI SUBMARINE ATTACK UPON HER FATHER'S FISHING VESSEL, MAUREEN MARINE WAS DROWNED--ONLY TO BE REVIVED BY FATHER NEPTUNE AND GIVEN THE POWER TO LIVE UNDER WATER! THE LITTLE GIRL IS THEN MADE QUEEN OF ATLANTIS!

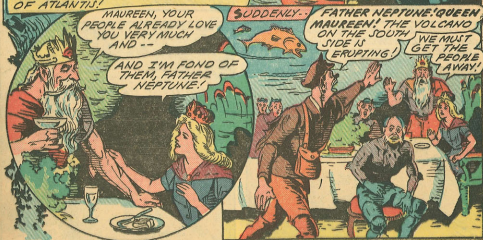
MAUREEN, YOUR PEOPLE ALREADY LOVE YOU VERY MUCH AND --

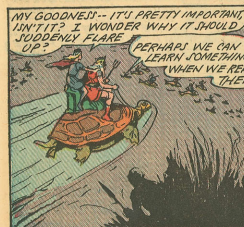
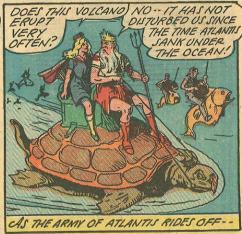
AND I'M FOND OF THEM, FATHER NEPTUNE!

SUDDENLY--

FATHER NEPTUNE: QUEEN MAUREEN! THE VOLCANO ON THE SOUTH SIDE IS ERUPTING!

WE MUST GET THE PEOPLE AWAY!





BUT, AS THE MIROMAN RACES AWAY--

IF I CAN OVERTAKE
OUR QUEEN AND THE
ARMY IN TIME, PERHAPS
WE CAN STAND AGAINST
THE MIROMEN!

A SPY! FATHER NEPTUNE
WAS WISE TO PLACE ME
ON GUARD HERE--HE
SUSPECTED THIS
MIGHT HAPPEN!



LATER --

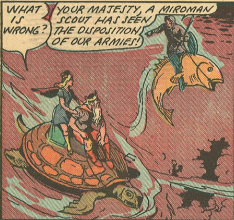
FATHER NEPTUNE
-- YOUR MAJESTY!
HOLD!

OH --
OH! TROUBLE!



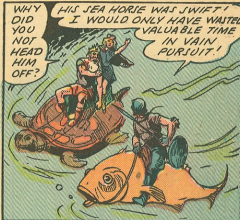
WHAT
IS
WRONG?

YOUR MAJESTY, A MIROMAN
SCOUT HAS SEEN
THE DISPOSITION
OF OUR ARMIES!



WHY
DID
YOU
NOT
HEAD
HIM
OFF?

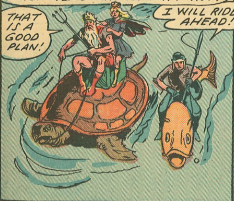
HIS SEA HORSE WAS SWIFT!
I WOULD ONLY HAVE WASTED
VALUABLE TIME
IN VAIN
PURSUIT!



OUR ARMY IS ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE
AWAY -- COULD WE NOT GET THEM
ORGANIZED AND ATTACK FIRST?

THAT
IS A
GOOD
PLAN!

I WILL RIDE
AHEAD!



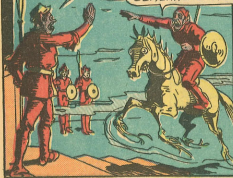
A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE THREE,
RIDING HARD, ARRIVE AT THE
SCENE OF DISASTER!



MEANTIME, THE MIRO SCOUT HAS ARRIVED AT HIS HEADQUARTERS...

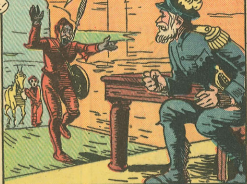
HALT! WHO GOES THERE?

OUT OF MY WAY— I MUST SEE THE GENERAL AT ONCE!



GENERAL! THE ATLANTIANI HAVE LEFT THEIR CITY!

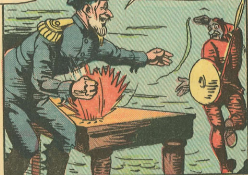
AH! THAT IS GOOD! WHY?



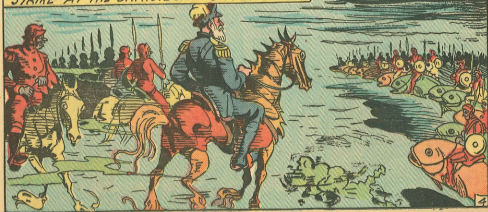
HA! THE GREAT VOLCANO TO THE SOUTH HAS ERUPTED AND THE ENTIRE ATLANTIS ARMY IS AT THE SCENE!

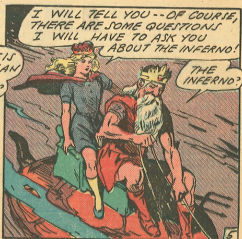


NOW WE ATTACK ATLANTIS! CALL OUT THE ARMY!



IN A REMARKABLY SHORT TIME, THE HUGE MIRO ARMY IS READY TO STRIKE AT THE UNPROTECTED CITY OF GOLD!





THEY ARRIVE AT THE CITY GATES...

HMM-- I THINK YOUR PLAN WILL WORK, MAUREEN!

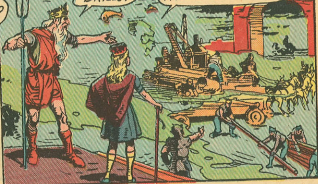
GOOD--WE MUST GET THE ENGINEERS STARTED AT ONCE!



MAUREEN'S PLAN IS SWIFTLY PUT INTO ACTION!

THEY MUST CARRY ENOUGH HYDRAULIC DRILLS!

YES-- IF OUR PLAN SHOULD FAIL, ALL ATLANTIS FALLS!



WE HAVE NOT MUCH TIME LEFT IN WHICH TO OUTWIT OUR ENEMIES!

BUT, OUR ENGINEERS ARE THE BEST! GIVEN JUST A LITTLE MORE TIME--ONE HOUR ONLY--



HERE IS THE UNDERSEA INFERNO--NO SIGN OF THE MIROMEN YET!

SINK THE SHAFTS AT ONCE, THEN DEPLOY THE TROOPS IN A FALSE LINE OF DEFENSE!



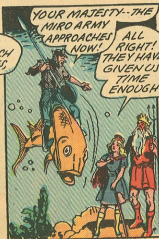
SERGEANT, BE SURE THOSE SHAFTS ARE FIRMLY IN PLACE!

WE'RE ALMOST READY TO ATTACH THE TIME FUSES, SIR!

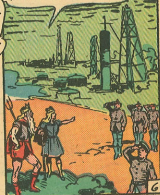


YOUR MAJESTY--THE MIRO ARMY APPROACHES NOW!

ALL RIGHT! THEY HAVE GIVEN US TIME ENOUGH!



SET THE TIME FUSES AND DEPLOY YOUR MEN! AT ONCE!



THE MIROMEN ADVANCE BUT HALT AT
SIGHT OF THE ATLANTIAN ARMY ---



HOLD! WHERE
IS THE SCOUT
WHO REPORTED
THE ABSENCE
OF THE ARMY
OF ATLANTIS?

I DID, SIR -- MY REPORT WAS
ACCURATE! THIS IS BUT ONE
DIVISION WHICH FACES US!



OH! GOOD -- ATTACK.
MIROMEN!
CHARGE!

THE BATTLE RAGES WITH THE ATLANTIAN
SLOWLY RETREATING ---



HA! THEY FALL BACK!
ATLANTIS IS EVEN NOW
IN MY GRASP!



THEY ARE A POWERFUL
FORCE! WERE IT NOT
FOR YOUR PLAN, MY
DEAR, WE WOULD
BE SLAVES IN
NO TIME!



LOOK --
NOW IS THE MOMENT!
OUR TROOPS ARE
WITHDRAWING
ACCORDING
TO PLAN!

LOOK HOW THEY RUN! IT
DOES NOT SEEM LIKE THE
ATLANTIAN'S TO RUN SO
SWIFTLY!



HMM --
COULD
THIS BE
A TRAP?

LOOK-- A GEYSER OF MUCK AND BOILING STEAM IN OUR PATH!

THE UNDERSEA INFERNO IS EXPLODING! THE ATLANTIAN HAVE ESCAPED!



HURRAY! THEY'RE STOPPED!

LOOK--SOME OF THE MIRO-MEN ARE TRAPPED BY THE GEYSER!

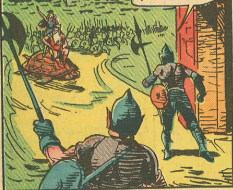


THE ATLANTIAN RETURN TO THEIR CITY IN VICTORY!



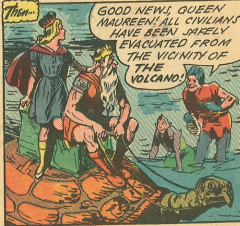
LOOK--OUR ARMY RETURNS!

OUR QUEEN HAS DEFEATED THE MIRO MEN!



Then...

GOOD NEWS, QUEEN MAUREEN! ALL CIVILIANS HAVE BEEN SAFELY EVACUATED FROM THE VICINITY OF THE VOLCANO!



I AM SO GLAD! THIS IS ALMOST LIKE THANKS-- GIVING DAY UP IN THE WORLD!

HA! A BANQUET IS IN ORDER! WE MUST HAVE A PARTY-- IN YOUR HONOR!



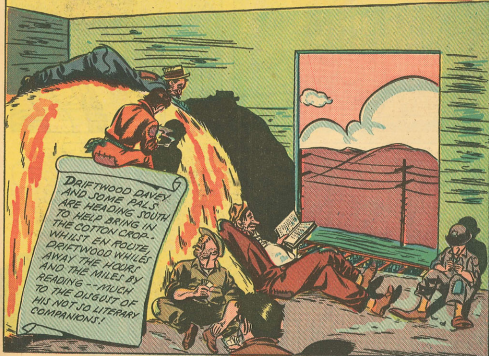
TO THE GREATEST QUEEN ATLANTIS HAS EVER SEEN!

LONG LIVE MAUREEN!



ONCE AGAIN, THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF ATLANTIS HAS BEEN SAVED --- BUT, HAS MAUREEN DISCOURAGED THE MIRO MEN COMPLETELY?

DRIFTWOOD Davey



HA! DIS IS DE FOIST TIME I EVER SEEN A FREIGHT HOOTCHIE READIN' -- WHAT GIVES?

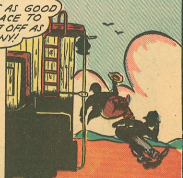
THIS BOOK IS ABOUT TREES -- YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT 'EM!

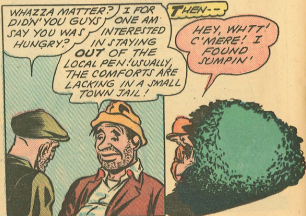
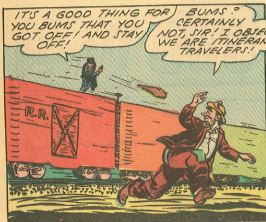
HEY, CHICKIE -- DE FREIGHT MAN'S COMIN' OVER DE TOP!

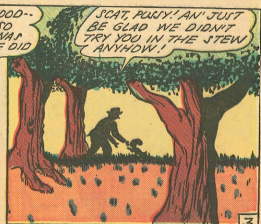
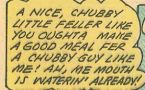
WE BETTER JUMP DIS RATTLER!

THE FRIENDLY KNIGHTS OF THE OPEN ROAD ABANDON SHIP -- BUT QUICK!

DIS IS AS GOOD A PLACE TO GET OFF AS ANY!







WHEN DRIFTWOOD RETURNS TO HIS FRIENDS, HE FINDS AN IRATE FARMER, EBEN SEED, HAS JOINED THE PARTY.

YOU DURNED HOBOES!
I'LL TEACH YOU TO
USE MY PROPERTY AS
STOMPIN'
GROUNDS!



SCRAM!! GO ON GIT,
YOU BUNCH OF POACHIN'
JACK-RABBITS!

OH-OH-



G'WAN--I SAID BEAT
IT! AND I MEAN IT!

YIPES!



DRIFTWOOD TAKES OVER--

THOSE NO- 'COUNT
LOAFERS.
I'LL...
HOLD
ON THERE!
NEVER ACT IN
HASTE,
SIR!



ANOTHER ONE
OF 'EM, EH?
DIDN'T YOU
HEAR ME?
ONE MOMENT,
SIR--WE ARE
ON OUR WAY
TO LOUISIANA
TO HELP BRING
IN THE COTTON
CROP! OUR MODE OF
TRANSPORTATION IS
NOT FIRST CLASS, BUT--



EH? YOU MEAN YOU
FELLERS ACTUALLY
WORK FOR A LIVING?

NOT ALWAYS--
BUT, TODAY
EVERYONE MUST
HELP! IN THIS WAY
WE SATISFY OUR
WANDERLUST AND
DO OUR BIT FOR
OUR COUNTRY!!



WA'AL, SAY NOW!
UH-- I GUESS IT'D
BE ALL RIGHT IF
YOU FELLOWS
WANT TO CAMP
HERE!

THANK YOU. PERHAPS
WE CAN HELP YOU IN
RETURN FOR YOUR
KINDNESS! THIS
UNTIMELY FROST IS
BAD FOR YOUR
PEACH CROP, IS IT
NOT?





FROST?! BY GOSH, THERE IS A FROST!

OUR COOKING FIRE IS SIMILAR TO THE SMUDGE POTS OF THE CALIFORNIA ORANGE GROVES!



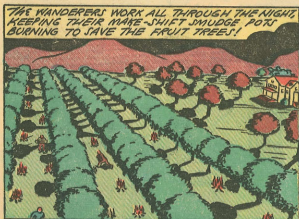
AND A LOT OF FIRES WOULD SAVE MY TREES! BUT, I'M SHORT OF HELP..

C'MON OUT, FELLERS-- IT'S OKAY! I THINK WE CAN HELP YOU!



IRON HEAD, QUINCY LUG-- AND THE REST OF YOU, GET SMALL FIRES STARTED ALL THROUGH THIS ORCHARD-- ABOUT FORTY FEET APART!

I GETCHA! C'MON, YOU GUYS!



THE WANDERERS WORK ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT, KEEPING THEIR MAKE-SHIFT SMUDGE POTS BURNING TO SAVE THE FRUIT TREES!



THEN, COMES THE DAWN! BOYS-- HERE COMES THE SUN! YOU'VE SAVED MY TREES!

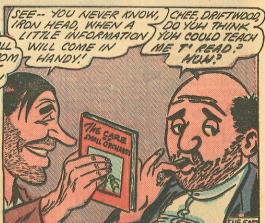
YUP-- THE GLORIOUS LIGHT OF DAY WILL SOON DISPEL THE FROST!



FARMER EBEN SEED REWARDS THE MEN WITH A BIG FEED!

YUM! DAT WAS SUPERS COOKIN'! BUT, DRIFTWOOD, HOW'D YUH KNOW ENOUGH TO LIGHT DOZE FIRES? YOU AIN'T NEVER BEEN TO CALIFORNIA!

OH, THAT! I LEARNED ALL ABOUT IT FROM THAT BOOK I WAS READIN'!

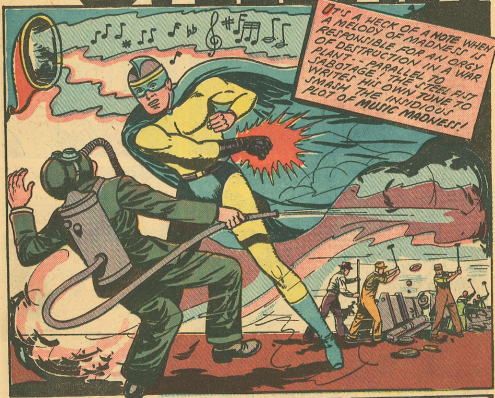


SEE-- YOU NEVER KNOW, IRON HEAD, WHEN A LITTLE INFORMATION WILL COME IN HANDY!

CHEE, DRIFTWOOD DO YUH THINK YUH COULD TEACH ME T' READ? MUM?

THE END

THE STEEL FIST



IT'S A HECK OF A NOTE WHEN A MELODY OF MADNESS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR AN ORGY OF DESTRUCTION IN A WAR PLANT. - PARALLEL TO SABOTAGE! THE STEEL FIST WRITES HIS OWN TUNE TO SMASH THE INIQUIOUS PLOT OF MUSIC MADNESS!

EVERYTHING STARTED WITH AN ARGUMENT - -

LISTEN, DOPEY-- WE DIDN'T ORDER ANY OXYGEN TANKS

OH, YEAH! WELL, YOU SIGN THIS AN' WE'LL SEE ABOUT DAT!



DON'T ARGUE WITH HIM, MACK-- SOMEONE PROBABLY WANTS IT!

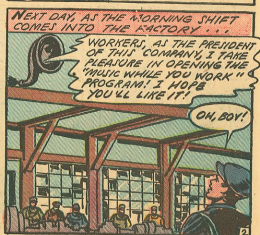
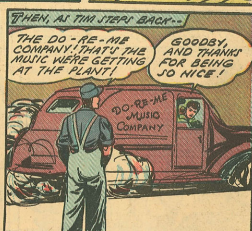
OH, OKAY, TIM! BUT, I DON'T GET IT! THREE TANKS WERE DELIVERED YESTERDAY!



YOU GOING TO THE UNION MEETING TONIGHT?

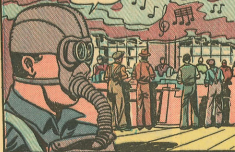
YOU BET! I HEAR THERE'S SOMETHING BIG COOKING





FROM OFF TO ONE SIDE, TIM BLADE (THE STEEL FIST) TAKES TIME OFF FROM HIS WORK TO OBSERVE HIS FELLOW EMPLOYEES!

IT'S AMAZING HOW MUCH INFLUENCE MUSIC CAN HAVE ON...



YES, ISN'T IT! AS THE MUSIC SUDDENLY BLARES FORTH, THE WORKERS STIFFEN LIKE MEN IN A TRANCE!



THEN, BEDLAM BREAKS LOOSE! EACH MAN TURNS TO DESTRUCTION OF THE VITAL MACHINERY!



GOOD GOSH! THEY'VE GONE MAD!

MACK! DON'T! IF YOU SMASH THAT TESTER, THE PLANT WILL SHUT DOWN FOR WEEKS!



TIM'S FRIEND DOESN'T SEEM TO HEAR AND THE BULKY HAMMER SWINGS DOWN ON THE STEEL FIST!

OH, NO YOU DON'T!



OUT YOU GO FOR A WHILE, MACK!



YOGHHH!



MAYBE I'M BEGINNING TO CATCH ON! THOSE GOYS ARE WRECKING THE MACHINERY TO THE TIME OF THAT MUSIC!



SO - LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS IF I TURN OFF THE AMPLIFIERS!



IT WORKS! THEY'RE COMING OUT OF IT NOW!

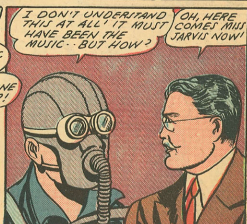
GOIN'! WHAT HAPPENED!? WHAT HAVE I DONE!?



AS THINGS BEGIN TO QUIET DOWN, MR. MITCHELL, THE COMPANY PRESIDENT APPEARS!

MR. MITCHELL, LOOK AT THIS MESS!

YES-- I'VE CALLED THE MUSIC COMPANY, TIM-- THEY'RE SENDING SOMEONE OVER!



I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS AT ALL! IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE MUSIC-- BUT HOW?

OH, HERE COMES MISS JARVIS NOW!



MISS JARVIS, LOOK AT THIS PLACE!

THEY TOLD ME WHAT HAPPENED! BUT, HOW CAN YOU BLAME IT ON OUR MUSIC?

WE DON'T YET-- BUT, IT'S THE ONLY THING...



OH, JUST BECAUSE THIS HAPPENED TODAY. THE FIRST DAY YOU'VE HAD THE DO-RE-ME MUSIC...

WELL? WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST?

MMPH-- WHICH ONE OF THOSE MACHINES DID YOU WRECK, MR. SLADE?

NOW, LISTEN-- THIS IS VERY SERIOUS!

MRS. JARVIS INVESTIGATE--

WELL, THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THOSE AMPLIFIERS! HMM-- THAT VENTILATOR MIGHT HOLD POSSIBILITIES, THOUGH!

WELL-- NO WONDER!

JUNE ENTERS THE MOTOR ROOM OF THE VENTILATING SYSTEM.

And -- -- YOU KNOW TOO MUCH, SISTER!

OHH!

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE SHOP--

MAYBE MRS. JARVIS HAD SOMETHING THERE, WHY DIDN'T I GO MAD, TOO?

SUDDENLY, THE WORKMEN STIFFEN AS BEFORE--

HOLY SMOKES -- THEY'RE OFF AGAIN!

TIM SLADE DECIDES TO TAKE CHARGE AS THE STEEL FIST!

WELL, THERE'S ONE IMPORTANT FACT, THIS TIME THERE'S NO MUSIC!



DANGEROUS PAY

WHEN the three men stopped at Jake Clayton's general store in the tiny foothill village to find out about where old Steve Blakely had his diggings, Jim Carney thought it was funny. Because Steve wasn't friendly with anyone. He was harmless. During summer you could see him at the village hotel occasionally with a mess of fresh vegetables. The rest of the time he'd trap and hunt, loaf around.

When Jake closed, Jim climbed the trail to old Steve's cabin, a mile or so back in the foothills. The three strangers might get lost. They'd been hanging around the village a few weeks, but that didn't make them mountaineers. Jim passed their car where the road became a trail. Jim was uneasy as he got there, yanked the latch-string, marched unceremoniously into the cabin—

The three men were grouped about the rickety chair to which old Steve was lashed. His weathered old face was wrinkled with pain and suffering.

One of the men whirled. "Damn!" His hand flashed, snapped out a stubby revolver. "Come on in and close the door. Scotty, y'better take a look!"

Jim advanced angrily. "You've been hurting Steve!"

"Mind your business, son!" Steve's voice slipped out of a dull daze. "This has nothin' to do with you—"

"Son?" one man repeated softly. "Sa-a-ay—"

"That's only what I call him!"

"Oh, yeah? That's all you call him! Well, we'll see just how much you think of him. Slim, fix the kid up over there in that other chair!"

Before Jim could act they pounced upon him, bound him helplessly. Scotty was heating a poker. He said grimly, "This has been a profitable hide-out since that last job. Everybody knows you've got a mine somewhere, Pop. You've been turning plenty over to the boys in the army." Scotty laughed. "Sentimental old sap! We'll just relieve you of whatever you've got bunked. First you're gonna show us where your mine is. How about it! Or do I have to warm son up?"

Jim felt sweat break out all over him. Old

Steve could keep his trap shut. He wasn't ordinarily friendly, didn't have to say anything. Scotty shoved the poker at Jim's face and the young fellow twisted his head away from the heat of the iron. . . .

The old man's level voice came grimly: "All right . . . dang you! Let the boy alone. I'll show you where the diggin's is!"

Scotty nodded approval. "I knew you had a place somewhere. We'll take son along . . . just in case you get balky again!"

IT WAS a long, tiring walk back into the hills to the old mine Steve Blakely had hidden.

The entrance was hard for even him to find. Scotty went in first, on hands and knees. Old Steve followed. Then came the others.

Inside it curved away to the left, heading back into the bowels of the earth. Suddenly the ceiling and walls vanished into the gloom. The party paused.

Scotty yelped suddenly, ducked as something whirled down out of the stygian blackness at the light. He threw up his arms as another vague form plummeted at them. "Bats!" Scotty's voice was scared, disgusted. "Where are we?"

"It's an underground cavern." Old Steve's voice was heavy and dull. "God knows where it leads—"

"Just you lead us where we want to go!"

The tunnel seemed endless, twisting and turning. There wasn't anything but the floor, the blackness, and the bats. Presently old Steve turned slowly aside. "Here. Somewheres. I just can't remember. It's a long time . . . here . . ." He stooped and the lantern revealed a corridor opening into the wall. He disappeared into it.

Scotty hesitated uneasily, peered ahead, apparently reluctant to follow. "Crafty old guy," he growled. "I—"

Steve's voice came plaintively: "Gold. Plenty of gold. For everyone. Gold . . . gold . . ." His voice rose to a shrill chant. "Gold . . . gold . . . plenty of gold . . . fools' gold! That's it. Ha, ha! Fools' gold. Gold for fools—"

Scotty dived into the tunnel. Old Steve came crawling out, straightened, laughing crazily. His face was a queer yellow color, and the

others backed away as he went staggering back into the darkness, his laughter echoing off into the cavern. "Gold. Fools' gold. Gold for fools. . ."

"Scotty!" Slim rushed to the opening. "Scotty! The old guy's gone nuts! He's laughing. He's—"

SCOTTY crawled back out, his face pallid, sweat-streaked. His eyes shifted and he held out his hand. The faint light shone on gold. Plenty of gold. . . Perspiration gleamed on Scotty's forehead.

"He's right!" Scotty hissed. "It's iron pyrites . . . he got stung! It drove him nuts—"

A new sound came—the dull, angry rumble of an explosion. The floor shook and out of the darkness came a veritable cloud of bats, whirring, spinning, diving, zooming up into the blackness. . .

"Scotty!" Slim screamed. "What was that?"

"The old guy blew the tunnel!" Scotty whirled, raced off into the darkness, followed by Slim and Mike.

Jim Carney waited. He could still hear the whirring of wings. He could hear the faint voices of the men. Back through the gloom came the smell of powder smoke. Old Steve had buried them all . . . alive!

They came tearing back, eyes wide. "He did it!" Scotty chattered. "Kid, this ain't the only way out—"

"I was never here before!" Jim said. "I don't know!"

Out of the darkness came the sound of high-pitched laughter. It rose and fell, echoed and re-echoed in the blackness, coming from no given point but rather from everywhere at once.

UNCERTAINLY Jim Carney started away, carrying a lantern at his side. He had to grit his teeth to keep them from chattering. These men were maniacal killers, fear crazed—Old Steve's voice came from close at hand. Right in front of them, it seemed. "Gold!" it quavered softly. "Gold. Fools' gold—"

Slim darted toward the sound with a strangled oath. They waited and old Steve's voice receded softly. Slim didn't come back and minutes ticked past. Scotty and Mike shifted uneasily.

"You watch the kid," Scotty finally ordered.

"I'll have a look-see. Maybe Slim—"

The darkness swallowed him, light and all. The silence was deathly. Scotty didn't come back, and neither did Slim. Jim Carney felt sweat on his hands, could hear the roar of his heart.

Mike muttered, "Something's happened! C'mon, kid. Lead me out. Quick—"

Unexpectedly Mike hurled himself forward. Jim dropped his lantern and they came together with enough violence to send them spinning to the ground, twisting and writhing.

By now Mike was fear-crazy a fighting maniac. He gouged and twisted and tore, his fingers gripping at Jim's throat. Jim felt his breath shut off, his heart crushing itself against his side. He smashed the leering, twisted face close to his own, drove it backward. He flung himself forward, smashing home another desperate blow, and Mike moaned, went limp!

Out of the darkness strode old Steve, his eyes snapping. Jim crouched back, gasping. . .

"Nice goin', son," old Steve murmured. "I conked Slim an' Scotty. Got 'em one at a time."

Jim asked hoarsely, "What—happened to—you?"

Steve chuckled. "I blasted the entrance shut so's they couldn't escape. Had some dynamite hid along with other tools. There's another way out along an underground river up ahead. An' this act of mine—" Steve's leathery face crinkled in a smile. He crouched down, watching Mike's twitching body. "I put on that act just to rattle these guys—separate 'em, if possible. I tricked them into following me away to the side, where I could deal with 'em—"

"But if the gold was worthless, why risk your life?"

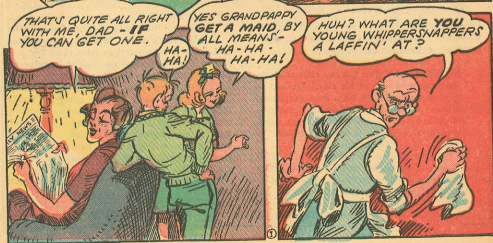
OLD STEVE'S face turned grim for a moment. "The gold ain't worthless. I let 'em think it was. There's plenty of gold and it's gonna be worth a heap, which is one reason I never figured on makin' friends, so's people would come snooping around!"

"You've just told me," Jim suggested uneasily. Old Steve Blakely laughed gently. "You're different." He lit his pipe, the smoke mingling with that of the lamp. "You're a heap different, son. You're honest, and, I need someone to step in here and give me a hand. Of course, there'll be some pay in it. Enough fer you an' me."

"You're entitled to your cut after risking your life. Yes, sir. We're forming a partnership right now. Shake . . . pard!"

THE END

SLAPHAPPY GRANDPAPPY



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I WANNA GOOD LOOKIN' MAID THAT CAN COOK, DO ALL HOUSEWORK -- HUH? -- NOW LOOK HERE, YOUNG LADY, DON'T GET SMART WITH ME, OR -- I'LL -- I'LL -- I'LL --

SO DO WE -- LOTS OF 'EM, IN FACT -- WE'VE BEEN ALL OUT OF MAIDS EVER SINCE PEARL HARBOR! SO-O-O, GRANDPA, I'M AFRAID YOU'LL WANT A MAID FOR A LONG WHILE! GOOD-DAY, SIR!

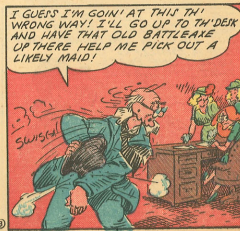
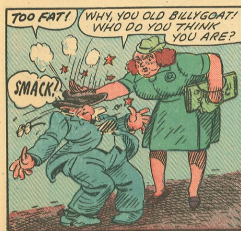


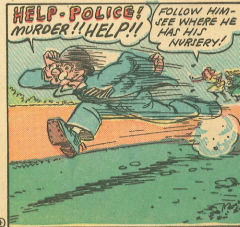
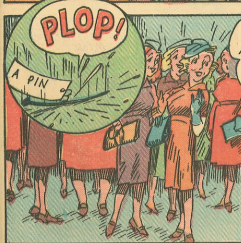
I'VE BEEN TO EIGHT EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES AND NO MAID YET -- BUT, BI-GOSH I'M GONNA GET ME A MAID! O-O, HERE'S ONE PLACE THAT SAYS THEY'VE GOT MAIDS!

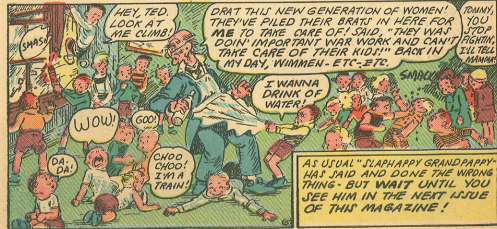
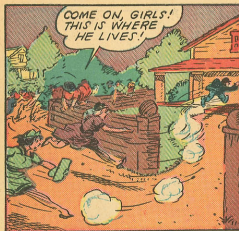


AHHH -- THIS IS TH' PLACE -- LOTS OF MAIDS TO PICK FROM -- LOOK AT 'EM GOIN' IN THERE! I'LL BET THEY'VE GOT WORD I'M LOOKIN' FOR SOMEONE!











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